REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-21 and 23-44 are presented for consideration, with Claims 1, 21 and 41 being independent.

Independent Claims 1, 21 and 41 have been amended to further distinguish Applicants' invention from the cited art. Support for the claim amendments can be found beginning on page 16, line 25 of the specification.

Claims 1, 3-5, 8-13, 16, 21, 23-25, 28-33, 36 and 41-44 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being obvious over Ludwig '294. Claims 6, 7, 18-20, 26, 27 and 38-40 are rejected as allegedly being obvious over Ludwig in view of Brunson '823. Finally, Claims 14, 15, 17, 34, 35 and 37 are rejected as allegedly being obvious over Ludwig and further in view of Palmer '683. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 of Applicants' invention relates to a distributed group system for displaying text data indicating where a user is on a screen of each terminal device. The system includes a server device connected to a plurality of terminal devices via a network, and having receiving means for repeatedly receiving a picked-up image and text data indicating where a user is, from each of the terminal devices, and first transmitting means for repeatedly transmitting the picked-up image and the text data to each of the terminal devices. Each of the terminal devices includes image input means for inputting a picked-up image from a camera, status input means for inputting text data at its own terminal device, with the text data indicating where a user is, and second transmitting means for repeatedly transmitting an image picked-up at its own terminal device and inputted text data to the server device in response to a user's input operation.

The terminal devices also include receiving means for repeatedly receiving the picked-up image and the text data of each terminal device from the server device, and display means for controlling a display device to display a virtual office area where a group of a user's virtual single rooms surrounded with a rectangular frame are displayed, wherein the received picked-up image which is transmitted repeatedly and the text data indicating where a user is are located in each user's virtual single room.

The other independent claims, i.e., Claims 21 and 41, relate to a method of managing a distributed group system and a terminal device, respectively, and have been amended along the same lines as Claim 1. Claims 21 and 41, therefore, also receive picked-up image and text data about where a user is, and control a display device to display a virtual office area where a group of a user's virtual single rooms surrounded with a rectangular frame are displayed, with the received picked-up image which is transmitted repeatedly and the text data indicating where a user is being located in each user's virtual single room.

In accordance with Applicants' claimed invention, a distributed group system and terminal device can display text data indicating the location of a user.

The Ludwig patent is directed to a multimedia collaboration system capable of displaying an information aggregate of another user's workstation. A computer based system uses geographically dispersed multimedia LANs that are connected by a WAN. As understood, Ludwig uses a collaboration initiator to indicate members registered in an organization, and session participants are selected from a graphical rolodex.

In contrast to Applicants' claimed invention, however, <u>Ludwig</u> does not teach or suggest, among other features, providing text data indicating where a user is input. Instead, <u>Ludwig</u> is read to disclose text data about what a user is doing. <u>Ludwig</u> further fails to teach or suggest controlling a display device to display a virtual office area where a group of a user's virtual single rooms surrounded with a rectangular frame or display, with the received picked-up image which is transmitted repeatedly and the text data indicating where a user is being located in each user's virtual single room.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §103 in view of <u>Ludwig</u> is respectfully requested.

The secondary citations to <u>Brunson</u> and <u>Palmer</u> fail to compensate for the deficiencies in <u>Ludwig</u>. In <u>Brunson</u>, a video messaging system is provided, and this patent is relied upon for a teaching of a universal mailbox to store messages. The <u>Palmer</u> patent relates to a video teleconferencing method and apparatus, and is relied upon for its teaching of frame rate control.

Therefore, without conceding to the propriety of modifying <u>Ludwig</u> in view of either <u>Brunson</u> or <u>Palmer,</u> it is submitted that such combinations still fail to teach or suggest Applicants' claimed invention.

Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 6, 7, 14, 15, 17-20, 26, 27, 34, 35 and 37-40 under §103 are respectfully requested.
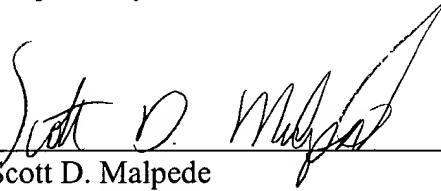
Accordingly, it is submitted that Applicants' invention as set forth in independent Claims 1, 21 and 41 is patentable over the cited art. In addition, dependent Claims

3-20 and 23-40, 42 and 43 set forth additional features of Applicants' invention. Independent consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of this application is deemed to be in order and such action is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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